

SIZE-DEPENDENT SAMPLING FOR MANAGING A DATA NETWORK**Abstract of the Invention**

The present invention provides a method for sampling data flows in a data network in order to estimate a total data volume in the network. Sampling the data flows in the data network reduces the network resources that must be expended by the network to support the associated activity. The present invention enables the service provider of the data network to control sampled volumes in relation to the desired accuracy. The control can be either static or can be dynamic for cases in which the data volumes are changing as a function of time.